



CONGRESSMAN DAVID CICILLINE



VA DISABILITY CLAIMS BACKLOG

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

(Source: House Veterans Affairs Committee Democrats)

Expediting Examinations

- **H.R. 1521 – Disabled Veterans Red Tape Reduction Act (Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney)** – Would extend VA's authority to contract physicians for medical disability examinations by 5 years. By contracting physicians, VA will be able to increase the availability and timeliness of medical exams required to process claims.
IMPACT: VA's ability to have contractors provide medical exams increases the availability and timeliness of those exams. VA needs the support of the contract exams to reach the goal of processing all claims within 125 days by 2015. Without this reauthorization, VA medical examinations would overwhelm the VA health-care system.
- **H.R. 1980 – Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (Rep. Walz)** – Would provide that, when a claimant submits private medical evidence, including a private medical opinion, that is competent, credible, probative, and otherwise adequate for rating purposes, the Secretary shall not request a VA medical examination.
IMPACT: Would conserve resources and enable quicker, more accurate rating decisions for veterans.
- **Claims Adjudication Centers of Excellence (Rep. Michaud)** – Would require VBA to establish a pilot for Conditions Adjudication Centers of Excellence that would focus on the 10 most complex and time consuming medical conditions.
IMPACT: The pilot would utilize the highest performing offices to adjudicate the most difficult medical conditions, such as PTSD and TBI, encouraging the VA to specialize claims processing by condition, reduce the time it takes to adjudicate these conditions, and decrease the error rates on difficult claims.

Process Modernization and Improving Accountability

- **H.R. 1623 – VA Claims Efficiency Through Information Act (Rep. Negrete-McLeod)** – Requires VA to provide numerous data points in an online setting that would better detail the backlog, the timeliness and accuracy of VA regional offices, and timeliness and accuracy of adjudicating specific medical conditions.
IMPACT: The reporting would provide both the VA, the public, and policy-makers with better clarity on the backlog and the specific claims that are proving to be a challenge. This additional level of detail was not available in the legacy paper system. VA indicates that this level of clarity should be available in VBMS. This would insure that VBA builds in the capability of understanding the workload at this level of granularity and ultimately may lead to gains in efficiency by better understanding the backlog and ways to address it.





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- **H.R. 1729 – The VA CORE Act (Rep. Kirkpatrick)** – Requires DoD to provide certified, complete, and electronic records to VA within 21 days.
IMPACT: Would substantially reduce the amount of time spent waiting for DoD to provide information in a timely manner.
- **H.R. 1759 – Require Detailed Reporting on VA Information Requests to Federal Agencies (Rep. Ruiz)** – Require VA to track all information requests to other federal entities.
IMPACT: Would require VA to provide quarterly updates to Congress in regards to the timeliness of other agencies in fulfilling their information requests. Veteran's claims are often untimely because VA is waiting for other agencies to provide information. By having more definitive data, VA and Congress can work to reduce these bottlenecks.
- **H.R. 1805 – Veterans Claims Efficiency Through Automation Act (Rep. Kuster)** – Requires VA to provide an annual report to list medical conditions that are processed in an electronic automated fashion, the consideration for adding additional medical conditions, and any barriers barring VA from adding those medical conditions that are not automated.
IMPACT: The reporting would require VA to consider how and if any of the medical conditions that they adjudicate could be automated or simplified. Any work that can be automated or simplified will allow VA to focus limited resources on the more challenging workload.
- **H.R. 1809 – Expedite Claims Processing by Educating Veterans on the Quickest Route to Receive their Decision (Rep. O'Rourke)** – Provides veterans with information regarding VA's timeliness for adjudicating claims in different formats such as paper application or online utilizing the Full Developed Claims program.
IMPACT: Would encourage and educate veterans to utilize methods that may increase the timeliness of their claims.
- **H.R. 1824 – VA Regional Office Accountability Act (Rep. Meng)** – Would require annual reports on VA regional offices that are not meeting their administrative goals of no claim taking longer than 125 days with 98% accuracy.
IMPACT: The reporting requirement would serve as a motivator for leadership to meet their administrative goal. It would also provide additional information in regards to the backlog at the individual VARO level and the information could assist policy-makers in considering additional solutions to reduce the backlog and provide better services to veterans.
- **H.R. 2086 – Pay As You Rate Act (Rep. Titus)** – Requires VA to pay for medical conditions as they are adjudicated in an electronic system. Currently, veterans only receive payment when all medical conditions are fully adjudicated.
IMPACT: Currently, veterans receive payment when all medical conditions within a claim are fully adjudicated. This legislation will require VA to pay veterans as individual medical conditions are adjudicated, which will pay veterans at a faster rate.

